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NATURE STORIES FOR YOUNG READERS

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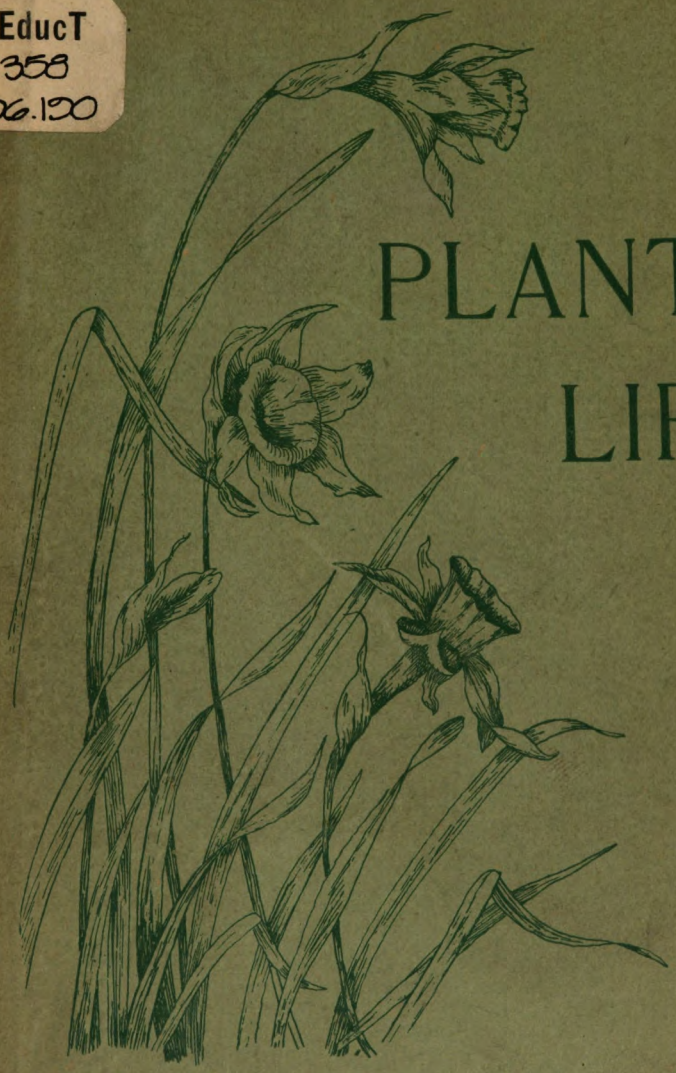

PLANT LIFE

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NATURE STORIES FOR YOUNG READERS

PLANT LIFE

BY

M. FLORENCE BASS

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

ILLUSTRATED BY MRS. M. Q. BURNETT

BOSTON, U.S.A.
D. C. HEATH & CO., PUBLISHERS
1896

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PREFACE.

THIS book is designed to accompany any First and Second Readers.

Some of the lessons are easy enough for First Reader pupils, while others are better adapted to children of a higher grade.

The book is intended to be used as a change from the regular reader, and not to be read through continuously by any class.

The arrangement of lessons is made with reference to the convenience of the teacher, who will select such as are suited to the season in which she is working.

It is hoped that the lessons will be given to the children as an outgrowth of observation and conversation on the subject-matter of the lessons.

Let the objects be brought before the children in every case in which it is possible, that they may become familiar with the real things treated of in the book.

They should observe the plants in the different

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stages of growth indicated, when reading the lessons descriptive of those stages.

Such a lesson as "Spring Rain" will be best appreciated by the children if read on just such a day as it describes.

Such lessons as "Out of the Ground" are intended only as texts, and will doubtless suggest many other items of interest to the children.

Many of the lessons aim to give only a particular instance of a general truth, to lead the children to discover for themselves other like instances, and finally infer the truth itself: for example, "The Chestnut Burr" will lead to a discussion of the different ways in which seeds are protected until they are ripe; "The Beech Nuts," to the storing up of food in the seed, which the young plant will need when it begins to grow; "The Milkweed," to the various ways in which seeds are scattered; "The Jamestown Weed," to the mutual help of insects and plants, and so on.

In the last-named lesson, as in some others, it has not seemed amiss to let the children see that there is something beautiful and interesting even in the most common and despised weeds.

This little book is sent out with the hope that it may brighten some hour in some schoolroom.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. M. F. B.

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TO THE CHILDREN.

Dear Little Children: —

Once, when I was a timid little girl, our family moved to a strange city.

I went to a school where I was a stranger.

One day as I sat in my seat, working at my lesson, I chanced to look up at my teacher.

She gave me a pleasant little smile.

It made me very happy, for she seemed to say: "I am pleased with what you are doing."

Yet she really said not a word.

Suppose she had frowned at me. Do you think I should have felt as happy?

I tell you this to help you to think how many things are really said, even when no words are used.

Plants, birds, and insects cannot say things to us in words, yet they tell us many beautiful things by what they do, if we will only learn to watch them and think about them.

They tell us something by just being here.

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Even a house says something to me. As I look at it, it says: "Some one made me, — some one who could do much more than any little boy or girl."

So when I look at a tree or a bird, it says: "Some one who is greater than any man or woman made me."

In these little lessons I have tried to help you to find out some of the many things that are told us without words, by things that we may see every day.

Will you not watch and think to see how many more you can find out for yourselves?

Your friend,

FLORENCE BASS.

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NATURE STORIES FOR YOUNG READERS.

SPRING.

"Spring is the morning of the year;
The summer is the noontide bright,
The autumn is the evening clear,
That comes before the winter's night."

Did you ever think how much spring is like the morning?

The sun shines out bright and warm.

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He takes off the white snow blanket.

He says to the little birds and seeds and roots: "Now, my dears, I've made it nice and warm for you.

It is time to get up."

Down come the little rain-drops.

They say: "Rap-a-tap, rap-a-tap.

Little buds, open your doors;

Send out your baby leaves.

Little seeds, wake up your baby plants.

Come little flowers, it is time to get up."

Then how quickly they all obey!

Up jumps the grass, so glad to be awake.

The little buds on the trees open their doors.

Out come the little leaves and flowers.

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Soon everything is wide awake, and as busy as you are in the morning.

THE BABIES.

"Rock-a-by baby on the tree top,
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock."

Is there any cradle up in a tree?

O yes, many little cradles are there.

They are not such cradles as your baby has.

They have babies in them; but they are not like your baby.

The cradles are little brown buds.

The babies are little leaves or blossoms.

They have been wrapped up there all winter.

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How snug and warm they have been!

They have many covers on.

Soon the spring will come.

Then they will wake up.

How fast they will grow!

They will not be baby leaves very long.

They will soon be grown-up leaves.

SPRING RAIN.

Rain, rain, I like to see you come down.

You try to get in at the window.

You rattle on the roof.

I like to hear you patter, patter.

You will make the grass green.

You are waking up the flowers.

You are calling the little leaves.

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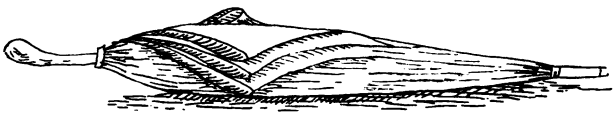
You tell them to come out of their brown cradles.

They have been wrapped up there all winter.

It is time for them to wake up.



SUGAR MAKING.

I went into a sugar camp.

I saw the big maple trees.

They had no leaves on them.

It was too early in the spring for leaves.

The sap had just begun to run in the trees.

Some of the trees had *spiles* in them.

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Then buckets were set under the spiles.

The sap from the tree would drop, drop, into the buckets.

The sap is called sugar water; it is so sweet and good.

By and by a man came to get the sugar water.

He put it in a big kettle over a fire.

The water boiled for a long time.

You know that when the water-drops get hot, they fly away.

The sugar cannot fly away.

It stays in the kettle.

So the water in the kettle got thicker and sweeter as it boiled.

After a while it was maple syrup.

When the man makes maple sugar, he boils the sap longer still.

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Then he stirs it and puts it in little pans to cool.

You know how good it is then.

Is it not queer, that the old tree can get anything so sweet out of the ground?

You or I could not do it.

PUSSY WILLOW.

How do you do, little children?

Here I come in my gray fur coat.

Are you not glad to see me?

I am the first to peep out in the spring.

When you see

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me, you know that spring will soon be here.

Do you call me pussy because I have fur like your cat?

You see I come too early to wear a thin dress.

I might be caught in the snow.

I have some sister leaf-buds on this tree.

They have only thin green dresses.

They are not awake yet.

They are waiting for Father Sun to make the earth warm.

I do not mind a little cold.

I have such a nice fur coat.

I just put it on, and jump right out to tell you the good news:—

Jack Frost is soon to be sent up north again.

Then spring will be here.

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A PEACH BUD.

I am a little brown bud.

I live on a peach tree.

I have lived there all winter, but I have not been cold.

I have on a warm brown cloak.

I will soon throw off my cloak.

Then you can see my pretty pink gown — all trimmed with green and white.

I have many little sisters on this tree.

Our home will look pretty, when we all show our pink dresses.

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Some of my sisters have green dresses.

The dresses are under their brown cloaks.

By and by they will throw off their brown cloaks.

Then they will show their green dresses.

You will say the tree has new green leaves.

I. THE WIND AND THE SUN.

Once the wind and the sun had a quarrel.

The wind said, "I am the stronger."

The sun said: "No, I am the stronger. I can do more than you."

"We shall see," they both said.

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"There is a man with a heavy cloak on."

"Let us see which one can make him take it off." So the wind tried.

He blew and blew as hard as he could, but the man only wrapped his cloak tighter.

Then the sun began. He shone and shone. Oh! how warm he made it!

The man said, "It is very warm; I must take off my cloak."

So you see the sun was right.

He could do more than the wind.

II. THE WIND AND THE SUN.

All the little buds on the trees had on warm cloaks.

The wind blew and blew upon them all winter.

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They were like the man.

They would not take off their cloaks for the cold wind.

Now the warm sun shines upon them.

They are glad to take off their cloaks.

The kind, warm sun can do more than the rough, cold wind.

So can kind, pleasant people do more than cross, angry ones.

SPRING NEWS.

Mother Earth has a new spring dress.

It is a beautiful grass green.

It is trimmed in yellow.

That is the work of the dandelions.

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Mr. and Mrs. Robin have come back from the South.

They have been gone all winter.

We are glad to see them again.

Mr. and Mrs. Robin go South every winter. They come North in spring.

It is easy for them to go where they wish and when they please.

They pay no car-fare.

They pack no trunks.

They wear all the clothes they have.

Now they have come to stay a while with us.

They will build a new home at once.

GRAND CONCERT, — every bright morning at sun-rise.

Mr. and Mrs. Robin will sing.

Mr. Bluebird will also take part.

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The sparrows will sing in the chorus.

Many other birds will sing.

All should hear the music.

Admission free!!!

BEECH NUTS IN SPRING.

Last fall all the little beech nuts left their mother tree.

They were going to start out in life for themselves

Their mother packed up a little box of food for each one.

They did not eat it right away.

They all went to sleep.

They slept all winter.

That is their night, you know.

One little nut waked up the other day.

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He said, "I shall take my stand right here."

So he put his feet down to the ground.

He began to eat the food out of his box.

He pushed the box up as high as he could reach.

Then he threw it away.

The box was the shell, you see.

When the box was gone, I could see what was left of his lunch.

It looked much like the meat of the nut; but a part of it had a pink color.

Pretty soon it began to unfold.

I saw that it was two green leaves.

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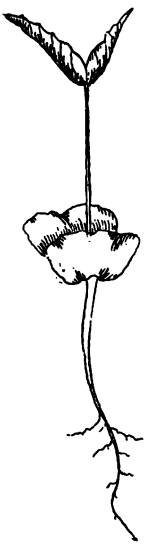
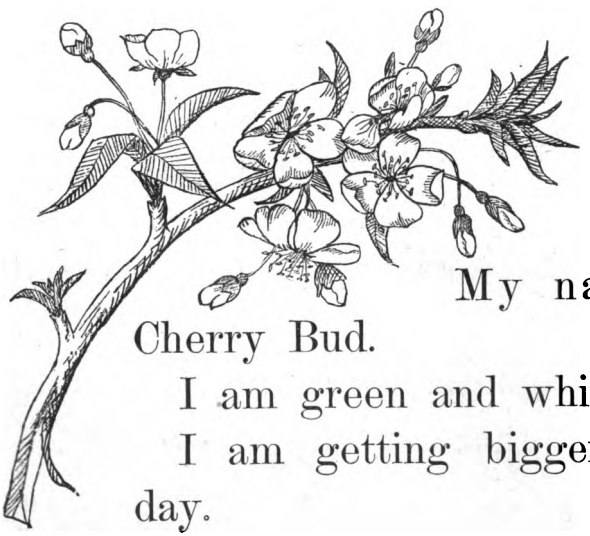
So now this little nut has really started a home of his own.

He is near his mother tree.

She can look down and see how he gets along.



A CHERRY BUD.



My name is Cherry Bud.

I am green and white.

I am getting bigger every day.

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Now you can see only a little of my white dress.

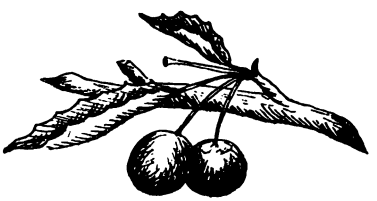
By and by you can see it all.

Then my name will be Cherry Blossom. Many of us live on one tree.

When we come out, the tree looks white like snow.

After a while the white part will fall off.

Then a little cherry will grow on my stem. When the cherry is red, you will be glad to eat it.



I. A DANDELION.

Do you see me?

I am a yellow flower.

My name is Dandelion.

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Do you think I am pretty?

You need not go far to find me.

I come near you.

You can see me on your way to school.

I love little boys and girls.

They love me too.

They are glad to see me.

I am bright like a star.

I shine in the day-time.

You may call me a day-star.

I go to sleep at night.

I have a short stem.

I am not very tall.

Some day I shall not look as I do now.

You will hardly know me then.

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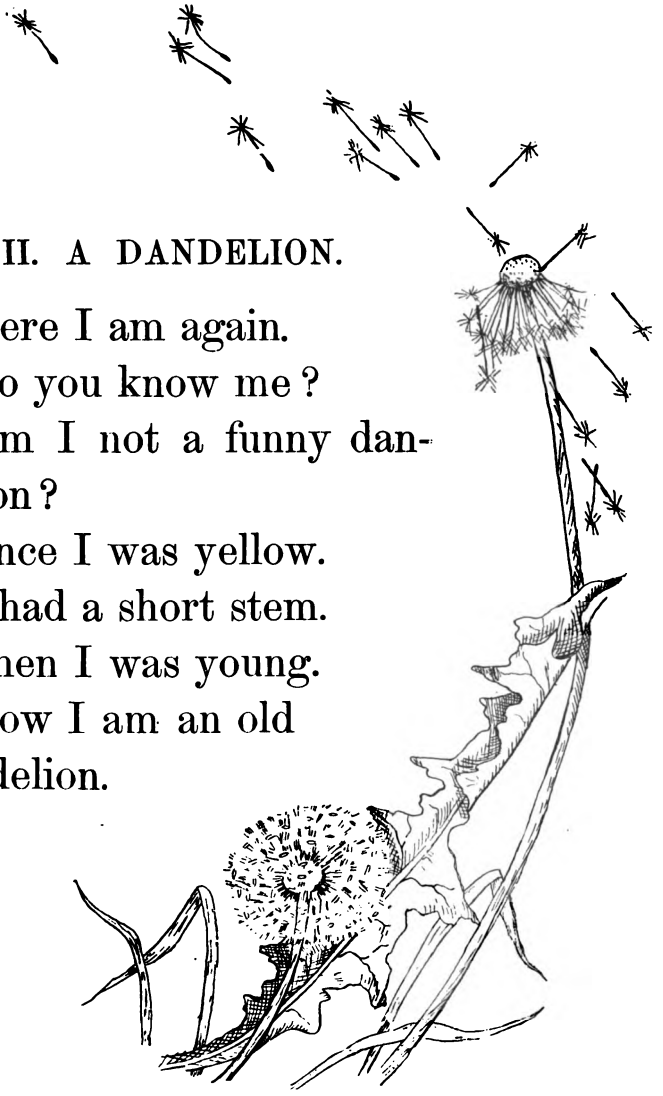

II. A DANDELION.

Here I am again.
Do you know me?
Am I not a funny dandelion?
Once I was yellow.
I had a short stem.
Then I was young.
Now I am an old dandelion.

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I have turned white like an old man.

See how tall I am!

See the round ball at the top of my stem.

It looks like mist.

It is made of little seeds.

Each seed has wings.

Some day the wind will call them.

They will all fly away.

Then you will call me bald.

A DANDELION.

A yellow flower I often pass,
Smiling from the dewy grass;
Like a bright star he is seen
Shining in his sky of green.

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But he wisely will not vie
With his friends up in the sky.
Ere the stars begin to peep,
Little day-star goes to sleep.

When the sun is in the sky,
Then he opes again his eye,
Looking up as if to say,
"I may cheer some one to-day."

But at last he shines no more,
For his bright young days are o'er;
And now, growing on the green,
Just a misty ball is seen.

Now my story soon is told.
Dandelion has grown quite old,
Like a gray-haired man, we say,
Waiting to be called away.

See! his hair is white as snow,
And he's very glad to go.

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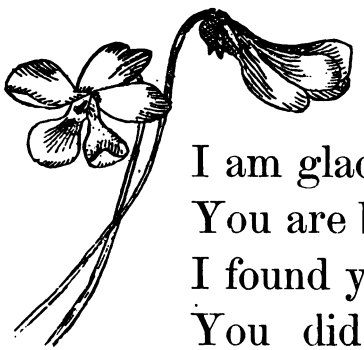
For I'll tell you, every one,
All his work has been well done.

When the breezes gently blow,
Voices call him soft and low,
Which he gladly will obey;
For he then will fly away.



A VIOLET.

Dear little violet,
I am glad to see you.
You are blue, like the sky.
I found you in the woods.
You did not know I was coming.

Yet you are dressed in your very best.

Is Miss White Violet your cousin?

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Miss Yellow Violet must be your cousin, too.

I love you, every one.

You bloom whether any one sees you or not.

I can learn something from you.

I must do my very best, even if no one sees me.

I. MAPLE SEEDS.

One spring day I looked up into a maple tree.

I saw many little seeds with wings.

How they turned about and tried to get away!

But their stems held them fast to the tree.

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They seemed to say: —

"Mother tree, do let us go.

We should like to try our wings in this wind.

We wish to begin to be trees ourselves."

But the old tree said: —

"Not yet, little seeds; you are too young.

Wait a while and I will let you go.

You must stay with me till you are quite grown."

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II. MAPLE SEEDS.

By and by the seeds were grown.

I saw one little seed fly gaily off in the wind.

"Now," it said to itself, "I can begin to be a tree."

It did not know how long it must wait.

It said, "Now, sun and rain, help me to begin to be a tree."

But they said, "Not yet; this is not the time to begin to grow."

So, all through the bright fall days, the little seed waited.

Sometimes the wind would come along and carry it to some other place.

All the cold winter it still waited.

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By and by the snow and ice came and held it fast. It could not grow.

And now it began to look very old and brown.

It said, "Shall I ever begin to be a tree?"

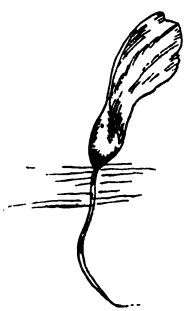
III. MAPLE SEEDS.

At last the warm spring days came.

I saw a little wing sticking straight up into the air.

I went quite close to it.

Then I saw that the little seed had really begun to be a tree.



Down into the ground it had sent a little white root, like a thread.

Out of its brown, hard coat came two long, slender leaves.

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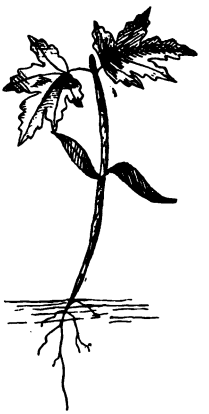
They did not look at all like maple leaves.



The little tree was glad to begin as best it could.

Before long it had two more leaves, regular maple leaves.

Next year I saw it again.

It was still only a very little tree.

"How patient you must learn to be, little tree," I thought.

"You wish to do so much.

And you must grow so slowly.

It will be years before you are a big tree."

We have to learn the same thing, little children.

All that is best, and all that lasts longest, comes slowly.

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I. THE LIFE OF A BEAN.

Here is Baby Bean in her bed.
She is all covered up.

I made the bed nice and soft for her.

I took out all the hard places.

Then I put Baby Bean into it.

I covered her up with earth.

That is this baby's blanket.

Then down came the rain-drops.

They were calling Baby Bean to wake up, but there she lies, still fast asleep.

She is all wrapped up in a white coat.

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She has something with her to eat, too.

It is ready for her, when she wakes up.

II. THE LIFE OF A BEAN.

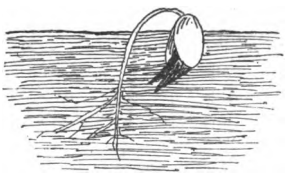
O, ho! Baby Bean is awake now.

She would not stay in bed.

She is peeping out from under her blanket.

The bright sun made her very warm.

She began to wake up and stretch herself.



She crept out of her coat.

She began to eat some of her food.

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Then she stuck out her little feet.

We call them roots.

They serve this baby for feet.

They help her to stand up.

I will tell you something funny.

She has mouths in her feet.

That is not much like a baby child, is it?

This poor baby cannot run about to get her food.

So her mouths must be where they can find food.

And her food is in the ground, you know.

III. THE LIFE OF A BEAN.

Well, Baby Bean is fairly up now.

She is climbing up as fast as she can.

See her reaching up toward her kind friend, the sun.

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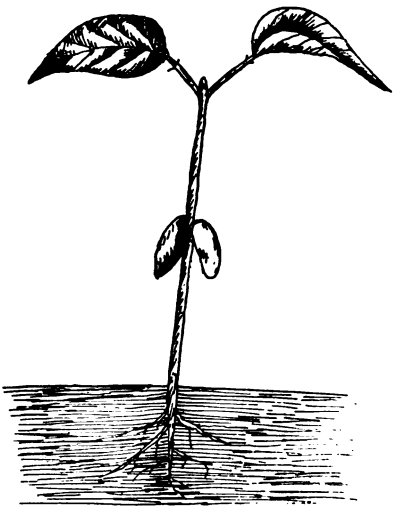
The stems are her arms.

They can carry sap up and down, to help her grow.



Your arms can carry things too.

The leaves are her hands.

They were all doubled up like a baby's fists.

They are like your hands in one way.

They have work to do.

They take in air to help Baby Bean grow.

She needs more than two leaves to work for her.

See that bud at the top of the stem.

That is another little fist.

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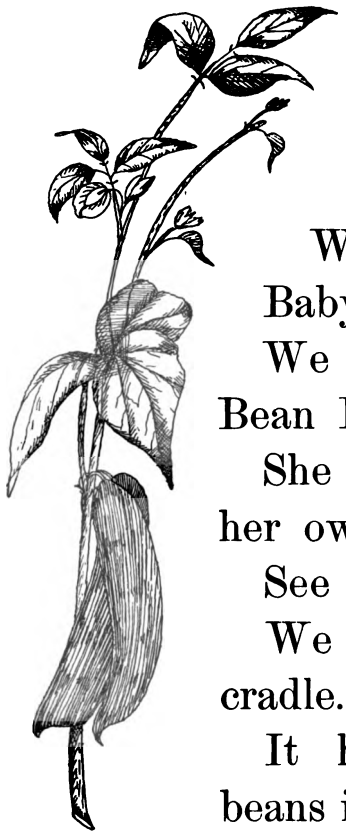
Pretty soon it will open.

Then you will see more hands, or leaves.

IV. THE LIFE OF A BEAN.



What has become of Baby Bean?

She has grown very big and tall.

We cannot call her Baby Bean any more.

We may call her Mrs. Bean Plant.

She has a little family of her own now.

See that little bean pod.

We might call it a little cradle.

It has five tiny baby beans in it.

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By and by they will grow big.

See that little white flower.

It will fall off before long.

Then another little bean cradle will grow there.

It will have still other bean babies in it.

After a while these beans will be big enough to get out of their cradles.

Then Mrs. Bean Plant's work will be done.

Think what she has done for us.

She has been busy all her life.

She has given us very many beans like herself.

I. A PEACH TREE.

"Old tree, how still you stand!

I am glad I am not you.

I should not like to be so still.

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Don't you get tired doing nothing?"

"Oh, little boy, do you think I do nothing?

Do not think so any more.

I am very busy at work now.

I cannot run and play as you can, but I can do much that you cannot do.

You cannot see me work.

You can see what I have done.

Do you like peaches?

Where would you get them, if I did nothing?"

II. A PEACH TREE.

"I will tell you about my work.

I have been resting all winter.

I have just begun my year's work.

First I must wake up all my little buds.

I feed them with sap.

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That makes them grow bigger.

My pretty pink flowers must be done first. When they are done, I look very beautiful.

I soon throw off my gay pink dress.

I must keep working on my little leaves.

They have been wrapped up in little buds.

I feed them till they are grown.

Then my green dress is done.

It is not so pretty as my pink one, but it lasts longer."

III. A PEACH TREE.

"Did you think I had told you about all my work?

No, indeed, I have not.

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I have all my little baby peaches to feed. I have more children to care for than a mother bird.

Each little flower left me a tiny peach.

I must send sap out to every one.

I must not miss any. I must put a little seed in each one.

I wrap up a little tree in each seed.

I wish you to have plenty of peach trees.

When my peaches are big, the sun will help me to color them.

He will paint them red and yellow."

IV. A PEACH TREE.

"I have not yet told you all that I do.

I must get ready for next year.

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I wrap up little leaves and blossoms in buds.

By and by the wind comes along and takes off my old leaves.

I need them no longer.

I have nothing left but my baby buds.

I have one where each old leaf lived. I wrap them up warm.

I do not wish them to freeze in winter.

Then I go to sleep.

Have I not a right to rest?

Have I not done much work?

Do you know how I get so much done?

I do not hurry. I do not stop.

I just keep at it quietly.

People who work as I do, get the most work done."

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A PINE TWIG.

Here is a pine twig.

See those long sharp things.

They are its leaves.

Are they not queer leaves?

They are called needles.

They are so long and sharp. They do not all fall off the tree at once.

If you go into a pine wood, you will find many of these leaves on the ground; but the tree is always green.

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It is well that the pine leaves are not big and broad like some leaves.

Perhaps they would hold so much snow in winter that the tree would break down.

The fine snow sifts right through these little leaves.

Do you see the pine cones?

When the cone is little, it stands up to catch the yellow flower dust.

It will not grow unless the yellow dust falls upon it.

When it gets bigger, it turns down.

Then the scales keep out the rain.

It seems to know just what to do, doesn't it?

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STORY OF A PINE TREE.

When the wind blows through the pine trees, they make a queer, sad sound.

Here is an old story that tells about this : —

Once a little pine tree was singing in its own home far away from here.

It was very happy with all its brothers.

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One day a stranger came and saw the pine trees.

He thought their music was very beautiful.

He liked their queer, needle-like leaves.

He said, "I must have a little tree like that in my own home."

So he took a little pine tree with him when he went home.

The poor little tree was very lonely in the strange land.

Its beautiful singing was all changed to sighing.

And so all trees like it still sing the same sad song.

Would you not feel lonely, if you were carried far away from your friends and into a strange land?

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THE BLUEBELL.

I once read a story of a bluebell.

A bird told it to a poet.

I cannot say that it is true, but it is very beautiful.

This is the story: Once a little flower lived down in a deep, deep valley.

Rocks rose very high on each side.

Trees grew on top of the rocks.

It must have been very still and lonely down there.

This little flower was white, — white as snow.

In the day it could see just a narrow strip of blue sky over its head. It would look up every day and think: —

"What a beautiful blue the sky is."

Then at night one bright star would come out to cheer the flower.

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So every day the little white flower loved and watched the blue sky.

Every night it looked up to the bright star.

Now comes the queer part of the story.

The little flower turned blue like the sky it had watched.

Inside of its cup came a little drop of dew, bright like the star.

Did you know that we are like the flower in one way?

We grow to be like what we see and love and think about very much.

SUMMER.

"*The summer is the noontide bright.*"

We know that the sun and rain woke up the plants in the spring.

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When the spring is gone summer comes. It is like noon.

It is the hottest part of the year.

What must plants do now?

Why, they must work during the day, just as we do.

Do you know what they do?

They make seeds. In every seed they put baby plants like themselves.

Every kind of plant must do this.

It is so much work that it takes some of them all summer to get it done.

The sun helps; the rain helps.

Every part of the plant does something.

Some day we shall learn how they all help.

Summer is the hard-working part of the year for plants.

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Some plants get their work done early. Some must work on till fall.

They are very much like people.

Some people must work all day till evening.

CLOVER BLOSSOMS.

Here is a treat for Mr. Bee.

Each of these little flowers has a cup of honey for him.

How many flowers do you think are here?

Did you say two?

O no; this is a picture of more than a hundred flowers.

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Dozens of little flowers live on each clover blossom.

They live as close together as they can. Perhaps they like good company.

One of these little flowers, by itself, would not look very pretty.

It is so little you would hardly see it.

Did you ever get the honey out of a clover blossom?

You cannot do it as Mr. Bee does.

He puts his tongue down into the flower.

You have to pull out the little flowers before you can get the honey.

It tastes so sweet and good, I do not wonder that Mr. Bee goes there to get it.

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I. A HOP VINE.

One day a little seed in the brown earth began to wake up.

It pushed up its head above the ground.

It grew very fast.

It soon had many leaves and a long stem.

Its roots were deep and firm in the ground, but, strange to say, this little plant could not stand up.

"What shall I do?" it said.

"I cannot bear to let my beautiful leaves lie in the dirt."

"Well," said a little tree near by, "just crawl over to me. I will help you get up.

"Can you reach me? That is right; do not fear to try.

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"Now just hold on to me."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Tree.

"Now I can get up nicely.

"I am so glad I did not give up trying to grow at all."

So the hop vine wound itself round and round the little tree.

It was soon as high as the little tree itself. It spread out its green leaves and looked very beautiful.

II. A HOP VINE.

After a while some little flowers grew upon the vine. But they soon went away. Then some hops grew in their places.

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When they were ripe a man came and gathered them.

He made some medicine of them.

And this medicine helped a sick woman grow stronger.

The vine had been very thankful to the tree for its help.

It might have said, "Now I cannot help the tree in any way; but I can help somebody. I know how good it is to be helped when one is weak."

So it grew and helped the sick woman. Can you not help some one who is weaker than you?

FLOWER-CLOCKS.

Who ever heard of a flower-clock?
Can flowers tell the time of day?
It seems as if some flowers can.

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When does a morning-glory bloom?

Did you ever see one open at night?

Little Four-o'-clock is true to her name.

She opens only in the afternoon.

She acts as if she sent out cards:

"At home from four to seven."

The yellow primrose opens her doors just after sunset.

She seems to say, "You must be made glad all day. Morning-glory did her best.

"Many little flowers have smiled at you all day.

"This afternoon Four-o'-clock let you see her pretty dress.

"Now here I come. I will make you think again, 'What a beautiful world this is!'

"I have a bright yellow dress.

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"You can see me even if it does get a little dark." Very many flowers close up their houses at night.

They act as if they knew it was time for rest. How can they tell when to bloom and when to close up?

Are they not very wonderful?

CORN.

Corn is a very beautiful and a very useful plant. Its long, slender leaves shine like satin in the sun.

Its flowers are made of silk and gold.

Did you know that a corn-stalk has flowers?

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It has two kinds of flowers.

One kind is at the top of the stalk.

It is called the tassel.

It is good only to make the golden flower-dust.

You know all flowers must have that to make the seeds grow.

Now where are the seeds to grow?

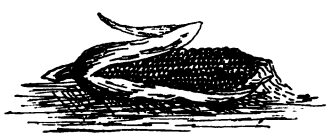
Surely not at the top.

There is no place in the tassel for seeds. Look at the silk on the corn.

Take off the little green husk.

Each little thread of silk leads down to where a grain of corn may grow.

Sometimes an ear of corn has bare spots on it, where no grains grew.



That was because no dust touched their silk threads.

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I. OUT OF THE GROUND.

What have I here?

Only a handful of dirt.

It is sometimes called ground.

It is a part of the earth.

I have heard people say, "Mother Earth."

Can you think why they say that?

Perhaps it is because it gives us so much that is good.

What! can anything good come from this black dirt?

Yes, indeed, it gives us nearly everything we have.

The earth is helped by the air and sunshine and rain.

Then very wonderful things come out of the ground.

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II. OUT OF THE GROUND.

WHAT WE EAT.

Do you think we eat anything that comes from the ground?

Think how many plants we eat.

Beans, peas, and corn are seeds.

Radishes and turnips are roots.

Cabbage and lettuce are leaves.

All these are parts of plants.

Coffee is made from seeds.

Sugar is made from a plant.

All fruits grow on plants.

Our bread is made chiefly of flour.

The flour is made from wheat.

Wheat is the seed of a plant.

We get many more things from plants; and all plants grow out of the ground. Does our meat come out of the ground?

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No, not directly.

All meat comes from animals, but animals could not live and grow except for plants.

So you see we would have nothing to eat except for what comes out of the ground.

III. OUT OF THE GROUND.

WHAT WE WEAR.

Do all our clothes come from the ground, too? Let us see.

Many of our clothes are made of wool.

Where does the wool come from?

It grows on the sheep.

Some of our clothes are made of silk.

A worm made that for us.

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Some of us have furs.

They are made of skins of animals.

So are our leather shoes and kid gloves.

These animals could not live without plants.

Many of our clothes are cotton.

That grows around the seed of a plant.

Some clothes are made of linen.

That comes from the stem of a plant.

Our straw hats are made from stems of plants.

If you think carefully, you will see that all we wear comes from plants or from animals.

Plants grow out of the ground.

Animals live on plants or something that eats plants.

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IV. OUT OF THE GROUND.

WHAT WE LIVE IN.

What are our houses made of? Of brick, perhaps.

Brick is made of clay which is itself a part of the ground.

A house may be made of stone.

That is dug up from the earth.

Or, a house may be made of wood.

That comes only from trees.

Houses have glass windows.

Glass is made from sand.

We use paint on our houses.

Men make paint from something that they dig out of the earth.

Some of our houses have slate roofs.

The slate also comes out of the ground.

Iron nails are used to build with.

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The iron is dug out of the ground.

Houses are plastered.

Plaster is made chiefly of lime.

That is made from a stone which comes out of the ground.

I cannot think of anything used in building houses which does not come out of the ground.

V. OUT OF THE GROUND.

WHAT IS IN OUR HOUSES.

We have carpets on our floors.

Most carpets are made of wool.

The wool, you know, grows on the sheep.

Matting is made of straw, a part of a plant.

Chairs, tables, and bedsteads are made of wood.

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We have stoves made of iron.

Our dishes are made of clay.

Knives and forks are made of silver and iron, which are found in mines.

What do we burn? Coal, perhaps.

It is dug up out of the ground.

Sometimes we burn gas.

It also comes up out of the ground.

We use gas or coal-oil to give us light. The coal-oil comes from an oil-well in the ground.

So you see we would have nothing in our houses, were it not for what comes out of the ground.

VI. OUT OF THE GROUND.

We have found that everything which we use comes out of the ground.

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Were it not for the ground we would have nothing to eat, nothing to wear, nothing to put into our houses.

Indeed, we should have no houses.

We could not live at all except for what Mother Earth gives us.

She is like our own mother.

She gives us what we must have.

She gives us many beautiful things besides, to make us happier and better. Think of all the beautiful flowers that grow out of the ground!

Think of all the fine gold and precious stones that come out of the ground!

See if you can think of anything that does not in some way come to us out of the ground.

Who makes all these wonderful things come out of the ground?

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A RIDE THROUGH A CLOUD.

Once I had a ride through a cloud.

Do not think I am a bird or a drop of water, or anything little.

I am a grown-up woman.

Then how do you suppose I could ride through a cloud?

Why! the cloud came down to me.

I did not go up into it.

I just rode through it in a buggy.

When a cloud comes down to the ground we call it a fog.

Have you ever seen one?

This cloud was down in a valley.

Up on the hill-top the sun shone bright and warm.

As I rode down hill, I could see the cloud below me.

I rode right down into it.

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I could see only a few feet ahead of the horse. There was nothing but white, misty cloud all around.

How cold and chilly it was in the fog! It had been bright and warm up in the sunshine.

Pretty soon the sun came up above the hill-tops.

How hard he tried to shine through!

He soon made all the little drops of water wàrm.

Then they turned into vapor.

I could not see them. They flew away. So the cloud was gone.

I. THE JAMESTOWN WEED.

What is this?

It is Mr. Jamestown Weed's restaurant.

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See his wide-open door!

He says, "Right this way, bees and butterflies!

"Walk right in and help yourselves. Meals ready at all hours!"

And how the bees do come!

They walk right in through the wide-open door, down the long hall to the dining-room.

They help themselves to all the good things they can find.

Out they walk and say not a word about the pay. But have they done nothing to pay Mr. Jamestown Weed?

Yes, indeed; they have done just what he wished them to do.

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As they went in and out, they helped put the flower-dust just where it is needed. The dust helps the seeds to grow. Do you suppose that is why Mr. Jamestown Weed opened wide his door, and hung out his white sign?

Did he wish the bees to come and help scatter the flower-dust?

Do you suppose the bees knew about the good they were doing?

Even if they did not, their Maker did.

II. THE JAMESTOWN WEED.

Is this Mr. Jamestown Weed?

Yes, it certainly is.

He does not seem to be keeping a restaurant any more.

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His white sign is gone. His door is not open.

His house is shut quite tight.

It is very plain that he wishes no visitors now.

Indeed, he has little sharp swords sticking out all over his house.

What does all this mean?

Why, simply this:—

He has changed his business.

He is now running a seed factory.

Nobody will have meddlers in a factory.

They only bother and do not help.

So he is just like other factory owners.

He shuts his doors and says:—

"No admittance."

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III. THE JAMESTOWN WEED.

Here is Mr. Jamestown Weed once more.

His factory is open now.

His seeds are all made.

He is anxious to dispose of his goods.

That is why his doors are open.

Mr. Bee does not seem to be going in.

He would find nothing good for him to eat, if he did.

He would say, "I cannot eat those little black seeds."

"Never mind, Mr. Bee, each of those seeds will start a restaurant of his own, next year.

"So while Mr. Jamestown Weed

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was shutting you out he was getting ready to do more for you by and by.

"You and your friends must be there to help him."

I. TWO FACTORIES.

One day I went to visit a chair factory. How much noise I heard!

Engines, wheels, bands, saws, hammers, and men all busy making chairs.

I saw the wood there ready to be made into chairs.

I saw the paint ready to put on them.

I saw what made the engine go.

The engine made all the wheels and saws and lathes work.

I could see just how the chairs were made.

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And very nice ones they were, too. I bought a red one for my little girl. Then I started home.

II. TWO FACTORIES.

As I walked along I passed an apple factory.

Do you know how it looked?

It was only a tree.

What beautiful apples were being made there! I saw no men, no engine, no tools of any kind.

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I heard no noise.

Yet there were the apples being made.

I saw nothing to make them of.

Some were just being painted by the sun.

Some already had a beautiful red color.

They were quite done.

I picked up one from the ground.

III. TWO FACTORIES.

I looked at the apple and thought, "What made it red?

"I saw this chair painted red.

"I know how it was done.

"I know how it was made, too.

"I could see what it was made of.

"Who made this apple?

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"Not all the men and tools in the world could make one apple like this.

"Yet how quietly and strangely it was done!

"How could that tree make such a beautiful thing?

"What is it made of?

"Its leaves took something from the air.

"I could not see what it was.

"Its roots took something from the ground.

"I could not see that either.

"But the apple is made.

"How was it done?

"Is not this factory more wonderful than the other?

"How many people thought of it as they went by? Did you?"

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AUTUMN.

"*The autumn is the evening clear.*"

The evening is cooler than the day.

So is autumn cooler than summer.

We have our work finished in the evening.

The plants, too, have about finished their work in the autumn.

Just look around at the seeds they have made.

See how every plant has done its best to make seeds.

After this many of them lose their leaves and stems.

The roots keep alive in the ground.

They sleep all winter.

Trees and bushes lose only their leaves.

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They make little buds that have new leaves for next spring.

These trees and bushes look as if they were dead; but they are not dead.

They are only sleeping till the cold winter is over.

See how much plants are like us:—

They work in their day.

They finish their work in the evening.

They get ready for the next day.

Then they go to sleep.

A MILKWEED SEED.

Here is a little balloon.

See how it goes in the wind!

The top part is as fine as silk.

See the little brown basket below.

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The little traveller inside is asleep.

His ride will not hurt him.

Neither will it hurt him to come down. He will not even know anything about it.

For he will not waken till next spring.

Then he will just creep out of his brown basket and go to work.

Do you know what his work is?

Why, to make more balloons like his own.

He will take care that a traveller is tucked up inside of each basket.

Then next year each of them will start out in his kind of business.

He thinks nothing in the world is so important as people like himself.

So he wishes them to be known far and wide.

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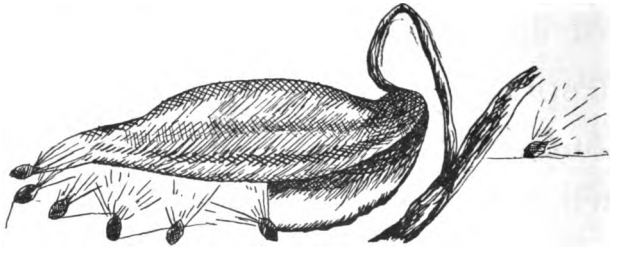
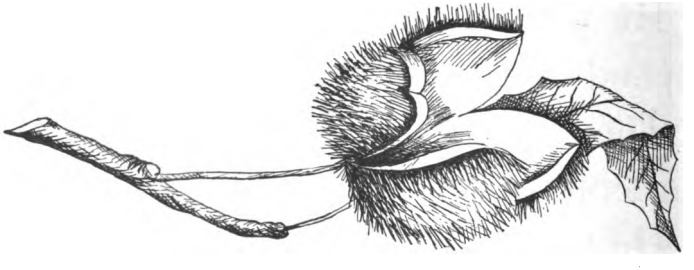
They cannot ride in the cars as you and I do.

They cannot fly as birds do.

So he takes this way of sending them abroad.



A CHESTNUT BURR.



See this chestnut burr.

It is soft inside like velvet.

On the outside it has sharp prickles.

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Three little chestnuts used to live inside.

This burr was their house.

It was a good house for them.

It took good care of them.

Is that not queer?

Did you ever hear of a house taking care of the people inside?

That is what this house did.

It kept them shut up safe from harm, till they were ready to come out.

The sharp prickles kept people away.

Neither could little Bunny come to get the chestnuts.

When they were ripe, Jack Frost opened their houses.

Then, out they jumped.

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TRY AGAIN.

"My name is Blue Grass.

I am going to preach you a little sermon.

My text is 'Try again.'

That is a good rule to follow.

I will tell you how I know.

I grew in front of a big house.

The people who live there are queer people.

They did not seem to know that I must make seeds.

What a hard

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time they gave me! I began my work early in the spring.

I soon became very green.

Out came the lady of the house.

She said, 'This grass is getting too tall.' You know what happened then.

I had to begin all over again.

I soon got another good start.

Along came a boy with a mower.

Down I went again.

I did not give up.

I just grew up once more.

How could I make seeds?

I had to spend all my time making only blades of grass.

I did not say, 'I cannot get my work done.'

I grew as fast as I could.

One day all the people in the house went away.

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They stayed a long time.
How hard I worked then!
I got my work all done.
See my nice ripe seed.
How glad I am I did not give up!"

THE BEECH NUTS.

Jack Frost came through the woods one night. He went up to a beech tree.

"Mother Tree, are your children ready to leave you?" he said.

"Yes, they are all ready, Mr. Frost.

I have kept them

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safe in their little prickly houses all summer.

Two children have lived together.

So they have not been lonesome.

Now they are old enough to leave me. So I have packed up a box of food for each one.

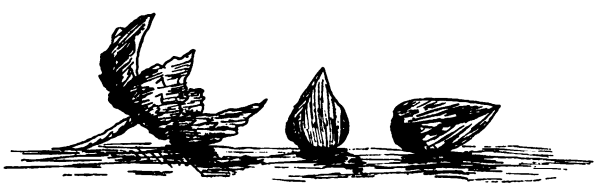
After it is gone, they will be able to help themselves.

They will have little roots of their own.

Then they can get their food from the ground as I do."

So Jack Frost opened their houses.

And the little beech nuts started out for themselves.



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A SUNFLOWER.

See what a big, bright flower I am. I am called a sunflower. I like that name.

The sun is the best and brightest thing I know.

So I love to look at it. I watch it all day.

As it moves along in the sky, I turn my face so that I can see it.

Do you not like to look at the best thing you know?

Do I not look a little like the big sun? Perhaps that is why I am called a sunflower.

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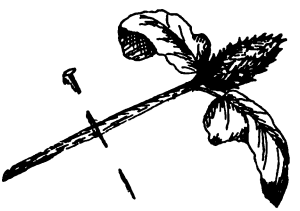
It may be because I am always looking at the sun.

It is nice to be named for something so great and good.

Do you not think so?

THE COCKLEBUR.



One day I saw a little cocklebur.

It had only two leaves and one burr.

Many of its friends near by had grown very large.

Some of them had made more than a hundred burrs. It seemed to say:—

"Do not blame me because I am so little.

I did not have a chance to grow at all till just a little while ago.

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I had not time to make any more leaves.

Something told me that Jack Frost was soon coming.

You know we must go to sleep when he comes.

We never let him find us with nothing done. So I had to hurry.

It would never do to let him catch me without a single burr.

So you see I have made one.

I shall leave a few seeds to make more cockleburs next year.

What would you think of me, if I lived all my life and did nothing?

I should not like to go to sleep with nothing done.

I am sorry I could not do more.

I did the best I could in the time I had."

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AUTUMN LEAVES.

Jack Frost has been in the woods.

All the little leaves put on their fall dresses. How pretty the trees look dressed in red and golden and brown.

The other day, North Wind came rushing along in his rough, cold way.

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The tender little plants began to shiver and sigh.

They said, "What shall we do?

We shall surely freeze."

The leaves upon the trees heard them and said:—

"We can do something to help those plant people.

Dear Mother Tree, we shall be sorry to leave you.

We love you very much; but we want to go and make a warm cover for those little plants."

"That is right," said the old tree.

"I am strong. The cold wind cannot hurt me. You have helped me all summer. I do not need you now.

Go where you can do some good."

So down the little leaves went, softly, one by one.

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They soon made a warm cover for the tender plants.

And the old tree was quite bare.

Then the blue sky smiled down upon them as if pleased with them.

Can you think why? All their lives these leaves had been doing good.

Even now they are helping others.

I. GOING HOME.

Have you ever seen a little brook?
It is made of little water-drops.
They are on their way home.

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Sometimes they go fast.

Then how they do laugh and chatter!

Perhaps they think they will soon be at home.

Their home is the big ocean.

They are going there as fast as they can. Some of them have been gone a long time.

Perhaps they are telling where they have been.

I am sure they are glad to be with one another.

One little drop cannot do much by itself, but many of them together can do a great deal.

They act as if they knew this.

For they all run down hill, as fast as they can, to the lowest place they can find.

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There they meet one another.

Then they go dancing along together.

As they go on, more and more water-drops come to join them.

II. GOING HOME.

As the little drops run down hill, they say:—

"Come, let us go on together.

We are all going to the same place.

Let us do some good as we go."

So each picks up his load of dirt from the hill, and runs on.

By and by they stop and leave their load in some low place. The farmer is glad to have them leave it in his field.

It makes the soil rich. They stop to rest awhile in the low place.

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Do you think they know what a pretty picture they are making?

Look down at them, some day.

See if you do not find a picture of the sky and clouds and trees.

III. GOING HOME.

Our little water-drops must hurry on. They soon join a big river.

The river itself gets bigger and bigger, as it nears the sea, because a great many other rivers and brooks have joined it.

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It does much good as it flows on.

It helps turn mills for people.

It carries steamboats from place to place.

At last the little water-drops reach their home.

Old ocean rushes up to meet them.

What a great roaring noise is made by so many little drops together!

Do you suppose they are all talking at once?

Can they be telling of their journey, what they have done, and how they have helped one another?

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Perhaps they have learned how little they can do alone, and how much they can do together.

They find many other drops just starting out.

So they keep coming and going all the time.

WINTER.

Winter is the night of the year.

It is the coldest part.

It is the darkest part.

It is also the time for little plants to go to rest.

They are like some children.

They do not wish to go to bed.

They stay awake as long as they can, but Jack Frost comes around and sends them to bed — whether they will or not.

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Then down comes a soft white blanket. Do you know what it is made of? Is it made of wool?

See how nature takes care of everything. She gives all her buds little warm coats.

She wraps up little plants in seeds.

She puts something in the seed for them to eat when they wake up.

She keeps the roots alive in the ground. She does more yet: she sends down a cover of snow.

And the plants sleep safe and warm through the long winter.

WINTER NOTES.

One day last week a queer thing happened. At night Earth had on an old brown dress.

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The next morning, she had on a most beautiful white dress.

Now who could have made that dress so quickly?

It must have been woven up in the clouds.

It was just dropped down upon her.

When the sun got up, he must have been surprised.

He looked so bright, I thought he was laughing.

Perhaps he said to himself: "I will see what that dress is made of.

I will unravel it just for fun."

Would you believe it!

Before night that beautiful white dress was gone.

Just her brown dress was left.

Last night she got another white dress just like the first.

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And this morning, when the sun came out, he covered it with diamonds.

It was so white and bright I could hardly look at it.

Do you know what the dress was made of?

Do you suppose Jack Frost had anything to do with it?

I. THE SNOWFLAKE'S STORY.

"Dear little snowflake, how pretty you are! I am so glad to see you.

You are so very white and clean.

Are you a winter flower?

Did you grow up in the sky?

Where did you come from?

May I take you into the house?"

"If you do, little girl, I will not be a snowflake.

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I take off my white fur cloak in a warm place. Don't you?

It is my winter dress.

I wear it only when it is cold.

I have other dresses.

If I put them on, you do not call me a snowflake.

I will tell you where I came from."

II. THE SNOWFLAKE'S STORY.

"My home was in the big sea.

I was a water-drop then.

One day I thought I would like to take a journey.

I asked some of my friends to go with me.

Very many were glad to go.

We put on our thin vapor dresses.

The sun helped us up into a cloud.

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The cloud was our car.

The wind was our engine.

What a good time we had!

We rode over many cities and towns.

We saw hills and mountains.

We looked down into rivers and lakes.

It was very beautiful."

III. THE SNOWFLAKE'S STORY.

"One day we met another engine.

It was a cold wind.

It made us very cold.

So we all put on our white dresses.

Then, you know, we were snowflakes.

These dresses made us heavy.

We broke through our car.

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Down we fell to the ground.

Oh, how glad the children were to see us!

They ran and jumped, and said:—

'Oh, it is snowing! I am so glad!'

So you see we have done one good thing. We have made the little people happy."

IV. THE SNOWFLAKE'S STORY.

"I have told you where I came from.

Now I will tell you about my dresses.

My common dress is called water-drop.

You know how I look when I have that on.

I wear that dress most of the time.

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If it is cold, I put on my snow or sleet dress.

Or sometimes I put on my hailstone dress. If I get very hot, I put on my vapor dress.

And I have a still thinner dress when I am hottest.

You cannot see it at all.

When I have it on, I am called steam."

V. THE SNOWFLAKE'S STORY.

"Now I will tell you some things which I can do. You think I am so little that I cannot do much.

I can help do very many good things. Can you?

When I am a snowflake, I help cover up the flowers.

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When I am a rain-drop, I help plants to grow. I run down the hills into the brooks and rivers. I carry rich dirt with me. I leave it in the valley, but I go on home to the sea.

When I am steam, I am very strong. I can help pull the cars you ride in. I can do many more things. Will you try to find out some of them?"

I. A BIG ROOM.

"The sky is a drinking-cup
Which was overturned of old;
And it pours into the eyes of men
Its wine of airy gold.
We drink of the wine all day,
Till the last drop is drained up;
And are lighted off to bed
By the jewels in the cup."

I will tell you about a big, beautiful room. It is not shaped like this room.

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The walls and ceiling are round like the inside of a bowl.

It is so large that thousands of people can live in it.

It is carpeted with brown, or green, or sometimes white.

Its ceiling and walls are usually bright blue, with some white spots.

Sometimes one wall becomes bright red and golden.

At times a gray curtain covers them all over.

Once in a great while, on this curtain is a half-ring made of many beautiful colors.

The room has one big, warm, bright light.

This keeps it warm as well as light.

Part of the time some of the people cannot see the light.

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Then their part of the room is dark.

Their ceiling is nearly black.

It is dotted all over with many little lights. The people need never tire of this beautiful room.

It does not always look the same.

Besides, it is full of wonderful secrets. They are locked away in every possible corner, even under the carpet, in the walls, and in the ceiling.

The people have a right to find out all they can; yet nobody has ever found out all of them.

II. A BIG ROOM.

The people who live in the room are very different from one another.

Some of them do not seem to care at all to look at the beautiful room.

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They do not care to find out the secrets; but some of the people care about them.

They first get the keys to unlock the secrets.

Then how they do search!

They look down under the carpet to see how the room is made.

They try to find out whether it always looked as it looks now.

They look up at the big lights and the little lights.

They try to find out how far away they are, and what they are made of.

They do find out some of these things.

It is like opening one wonder-box after another.

Then they learn many things that do them good.

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Often these things help all the people in the big room.

If you were in that room, what do you think you would do?

Would you not think it a beautiful room?

Would you not try to find out some of its secrets?

You surely would.

III. A BIG ROOM.

Well, little people, you and I are in the big, beautiful room.

We have been in it all our lives.

Have you not guessed that the room is the world we live in?

Can you not tell me what the ceiling is, and what the big and little lights are?

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Do you not know about the carpet and the gray curtain?

Have you not seen the red and golden wall at sunset?

Is not the rainbow a beautiful colored half-ring?

The secrets are the many interesting things we can learn.

We try to find out about the sun and moon and stars.

We study about the earth itself, — what is on it, and inside of it, and around it.

We learn how plants and animals live and grow and take care of their babies.

There is no end to the different ways in which they do these things.

We find that we could not live without plants and animals.

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They could not live except for what comes out of the ground.

None of us could live without the sun and air. So everything about the big world works together, — one part helping another.

IV. A BIG ROOM.

Would you like to unlock some of the secrets in this big world?

When you come to school your teacher is trying to give you the keys.

Reading is one of the keys.

When you can read, you can find out what wise men have already learned.

Then you can begin where they left off and learn more.

Your teacher gives you another key

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when she shows you how to use what you learn.

She shows you many wonderful things about plants and animals.

Then you must look at these things for yourselves and try to learn more.

People have already learned many very wonderful things.

They used to fear and tremble at lightning.

Now they know that it is only the same thing that we hitch up to our electric street cars.

The people make it carry words to our friends, hundreds of miles away, in a minute.

Are not these secrets worth finding out?

Men have learned that many kinds of plants will cure sick people.

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Is not that a good thing to know?

Some wise men spend all their lives finding out new things.

And yet there is always more to learn.

V. A BIG ROOM.

We have talked about just a few things in the big room.

Let us look up a little while.

Think of the big, warm, bright sun.

Did you know that it is many, many times bigger than the world?

It is so far away that you could not live long enough to go half way to it, even if you could go there as fast as the cars run.

Look at the little twinkling stars.

Many of them are bigger than the sun.

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They look so little because they are very far away.

They are like our sun, and may have worlds near them like ours.

Look up some clear night and see how many bright, twinkling stars you can find.

Perhaps each one is a sun for some little children in a world millions of miles away from us.

So you see, after all, this big world is just like one big room in God's house.

"*In my Father's house are many mansions.*"

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